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ALSTON&BIRD LLP

601 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. North Building, 10th Floor Washington, DC 20004-2601

> 202-756-3300 Fax: 202-756-3333 www.alston.com

Frederick M. Joyce Marianne Roach Casserly Direct Dial: 202-756-3376 Direct Dial: 202-756-3379

July 12, 2002

E-mail: rjoyce@alston.com
E-mail: mcasserly@alston.com
RECEIVED

96-45

JUL 12 2002

PERENAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Eric Einhorn, Acting Chief
Telecommunications Access Policy Division
Wireline Competition Bureau
Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street SW Washington, DC 20554

Re:

LETTER OF APPEAL

VIA: HAND DELIVERY AND FACSIMILE (202) 418-2825

Legal Reporting Name: Morris Communications, Inc.

Filer 499 ID: 812163

Dear Mr. Einhorn:

Morris Communications, Inc. ("Morris"), by its attorneys, and pursuant to the instructions contained in the letter attached as <u>Exhibit One</u>, hereby appeals the decision of the Universal Service Administrative Company ("USAC") dated May 15, 2002, which is attached as <u>Exhibit One</u>. In that decision, USAC notified Morris that it was unable to accept the revised FCC Form 499-A submitted by Morris on or about March 25, 2002, covering the time period January 1 – December 31, 1999, because the revision "was not filed within one year of the original submission." Morris respectfully submits that, for the reasons stated herein, the revised Form 499-A, a copy of which is attached as <u>Exhibit Two</u>, should be accepted by USAC and that USAC should promptly issue corrected invoices to reflect the proper universal service contribution amount owed by Morris.

I. Background

When Morris completed and filed its FCC Form 499 for the time period covering January 1 through December 31, 1999, it mistakenly reported its intrastate revenues as international revenues. Morris has no international revenues. This clerical error resulted in Morris being improperly billed over \$500,000 in universal service fees (based upon Morris's calculations, Morris should have been billed approximately \$55,000 to \$70,000).

Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) July 12, 2002 Page 2

The management of Morris contacted USAC by telephone several times after receiving the erroneous invoice to explain the problem and to request an amended invoice. The errors were never corrected, so Morris's Controller contacted USAC by telephone in April and July 2001 to again request amended invoices. Morris's Controller was told that the billing error would be corrected; however, Morris's invoices were never corrected, and its invoices still show an improper outstanding balance of over \$475,000.

In March 2002, Morris's Controller spoke with Lori Terraciano of USAC about the invoice problems, and Ms. Terraciano provided guidance concerning the correction of previous erroneous filings and the manner in which Form 499 filings should be made in the future. Pursuant to Ms. Terraciano's instructions, Morris re-filed its Form 499 covering January – December 1999, on March 25, 2002. That corrective filing was rejected in USAC's letter dated May 15, 2002, since it was not filed within one year of the original submission (See Exhibit One).

II. USAC Does Not Have Authority To Assess Universal Service Payments Based Upon Intrastate Revenues.

Morris submits that, because USAC's original calculation of more than \$500,000 in universal service fees owed by Morris was based upon Morris's intrastate revenue figures, it is a void assessment and cannot be sustained. As noted above – and as Morris has explained to USAC in several telephone discussions – Morris mistakenly reported its intrastate revenues as international revenues in its original Form 499 filing for 1999. Morris does not provide international services, and discovered its mistake in completing the Form 499 when it received its invoice from USAC assessing more than \$500,000 in universal service contribution fees.

Neither the FCC nor USAC has authority to assess universal service contributions based upon intrastate revenues. See Texas Office of Public Utility Counsel v. FCC, 183 F.3d 393, 448 (5th Cir. 1999), cert. denied, 530 U.S. 1210 (2000). See also In the Matter of Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service; Access Charge Reform, Sixteenth Order On Reconsideration in CC Docket No. 96-45, Eighth Report And Order in CC Docket 96-45, Sixth Report And Order in CC Docket 96-262, 15 FCC Rcd 1679, para. 15 (1999) (stating, "Specifically, in response to the court's determination that the Commission lacks jurisdiction to assess providers' intrastate revenues, we have eliminated intrastate revenues from the [universal service] contribution base."). See also Sections 54.706 and 54.709 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 54.706, 54.709.

Because Morris's original universal service assessment was based upon figures that included intrastate revenues, that assessment is void as a matter of law. Therefore, Morris respectfully requests that USAC recalculate the valid amount of universal service fees owed by Morris based upon the revised Form 499-A attached as Exhibit Two (which was filed with USAC on or about March 25, 2002).

III. Morris's Inclusion Of Intrastate Revenues On Its Form 499 Was The Result Of a Clerical Error.

When Morris completed and filed its original Form 499 filing for the time period covering January through December 1999, it mistakenly reported its intrastate revenue figures as international revenues. This mistake was purely a clerical error caused by confusion concerning the proper manner in which to complete the Form 499.

The FCC has on numerous occasions allowed applicants to amend applications that omitted information, or contained incorrect information due to clerical error, when the applicant made a substantial good faith effort to promptly correct the deficiency. See, e.g., Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network, Inc., 60 RR 2d 828 (M. Med. Bur., 1986) (applicant was able to timely correct an error in an application by subsequently submitting a corrected document); William M. Ryan, 1 FCC Rcd. 1077 (Com Car. Bur., 1986) (a clerical error in a cellular application could be remedied by a post-lottery amendment); Butte Cellular Group, 60 FCC Rcd. 6745 (1991) (reinstatement of a cellular application containing missing documents due to clerical error was warranted).

Since receiving USAC's assessment based upon the original Form 499 filing, Morris has made many good-faith attempts to correct the problems with Morris's universal service invoices. The management of Morris and Morris's Controller have contacted USAC numerous times, attempting to resolve the problems with Morris's universal service invoices, and they were told in telephone discussions that the invoices would be corrected. It was not until March 2002 that Morris's Controller was advised by Ms. Terraciano of USAC that submission of a revised Form 499 for the January – December 1999 time period would be necessary to correct the invoices. Morris completed the revised Form 499 promptly after the discussion with Ms. Terraciano and submitted the revised Form 499 on March 25, 2002. Consistent with FCC precedents concerning obvious, clerical errors, Morris should be permitted to make appropriate corrections to its Form 499.1

IV. Conclusion

In light of the fact that USAC's original universal service contribution assessment upon Morris for the January – December 1999 time period included intrastate revenue figures, and Morris's good-faith attempts over the past two years to correct the problems with its universal service invoices, Morris requests that it be permitted to correct the

¹ Morris notes that, although USAC's letter of May 15, 2002, refers to a one-year deadline for making revisions to Form 499 filings, Morris cannot find any basis in the FCC's rules for imposing such a deadline, nor does USAC's letter cite any rule as the basis for the one-year deadline. Assuming (without conceding) that the one-year deadline is valid, it should not be enforced in this instance, or should be waived, because Morris's clerical error in completing the Form 499 led to a dramatic overassessment of amounts owed by Morris; therefore, there was clearly no intent on the part of Morris to report inaccurate revenues.

Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) July 12, 2002 Page 4

clerical error included on its original Form 499 filing for the January – December 1999 time period without further delay. In this regard, Morris requests that USAC process the Form 499 filing made by Morris on or about March 25, 2002, and issue corrected invoices to Morris reflecting the proper universal service contribution amounts owed.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Please contact the undersigned directly if you have any questions or if you require additional information.

1/1/2

Sincerely.

Frederick M. Joyde Marianne Roach Cas

MRC:mrc Enclosures

cc: Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), 2120 L Street, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20037

H. A. Morris, III, President and CEO, Morris Communications, Inc.

W. Todd Hicks, Controller, Morris Communications, Inc.

WDC01/97747v1



Universal Service Administrative Company

May 15, 2002

Morris Communications, Inc. P.O. Box 16419 Greenville, SC 29606 Filer 499 ID: 812163

Attn: Todd Hicks

RE: Form 499-A Revision Rejection

The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) has completed a review of the Revised FCC Form 499-A that you submitted for the purpose of revising revenue reported by Morris Communications, Inc. for the period January 1 – December 31, 1999. Based on the information provided, we are unable to accept the revision because it was not filed within one year of the original submission.

USAC recognizes that you may disagree with our decision. <u>If you wish to file an appeal</u>, your appeal must be received no later than 60 days after the date of this letter.

In the event that you choose to appeal the decision, you should follow these guidelines:

- Write a "Letter of Appeal to USAC" explaining why you disagree with this Revised Form 499-A Rejection letter and identify the outcome that you request;
- Mail your letter to:

Letter of Appeal USAC 2120 L Street, NW, Suite 600 Washington, DC 20037

- Appeals submitted by fax, telephone call, and c-mail will not be processed.
- Provide necessary contact information. Please list the name, address, telephone
 number, fax number, and e-mail address (if available) of the person who can most
 readily discuss this appeal with USAC.
- Identify the "Legal Reporting Name" and "Filer 499 ID."
- Explain the appeal to the USAC. Please provide documentation to support your appeal.

 Attach a photocopy of this Revised Form 499-A Rejection decision that you are appealing.

USAC will review all "letters of appeal" and respond in writing within 90 days of receipt thereof.

The response will indicate whether USAC:

- (1) agrees with your letter of appeal, and approves an outcome that is different from the Revised Form 499-A Rejection Letter, or
- (2) disagrees with your letter of appeal, and the reasons therefor.

If you disagree with the USAC response to your "letter of appeal," you may file an appeal with the FCC within 60 days of the date USAC issued its decision in response to your "Letter of Appeal." The FCC address where you may direct your appeal is:

Federal Communications Commission Office of the Secretary 445 12th Street, SW Room TW-A325 Washington, DC 20554

Please be sure to indicate the following information on all communications with the FCC; "Docket Nos. 96-45 and 97-21."

In the alternative, you may write and send an appeal letter directly to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and bypass USAC. Your letter of appeal to the FCC must explain why you disagree with the USAC decision. You are also encouraged to submit any documentation that supports your appeal. The FCC rules governing the appeals process (Part 54 of Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations 54.719 – 54.725) are available on the FCC web site (www.fcc.gov).

If you have questions or concerns regarding this letter, please contact Lisa Tubbs at (973) 884-8116 or Lori Terraciano at (973) 560-4426.

Sincerely,

USAC

2000 FCC Form 499A. Telecommunications Reporting Worksheet	ksheet	Approval by OWB
Annual Filing	- due April 1.	cest-genr
		ALC:
101 Filer 489 ID (if you don't know your number, contact the administrator at (873)-560-4400	-560-4400.	
If you are a new fler, leave blank and a Filer 499 IO will be assigned to you.)	812183	
102 Legal name of reporting entity	Morris Communications, Inc.	
103 IRS employer identification number 57-0	57-0420963	
104 Name baccommunications service provider is doing business as	Morris Wireless	
105 Principal communications business [Check the one that best describes the reporting entity - see directions. Check one box only.]	outing entity - see directions. Check one box only.)	
CAPICLEC CallulariPCS/SMR (wireless telephony incl. by resale)	ry incl. by resale)	Therexchange Carrier (IXC)
	X Paging & Messaging	Payphone Service Provider
Shared Tenant Service Provides	SMR (dispatch) Toll Reseller	Wireless Daria
If Other Local, Other Mobile or Other Toti is checked,	Other Local	Other Toll
]		
105 Holding company O2F(All affiliated companies should show same name here)		
107 FCC Registration Number (FRN) [not required for April 2009 filing]	0001-8848-57	
108 Management company (if carrier is managed by another enity)		
109 Complete mailing address of reporting entity	Morris Communications, Inc.	
corporate headquarters	PO Box 16419 Green/lle, SC 29606	
110 Complete business address for customer inquiries and complaints		
(if different from address entered on Line 109)		
111 Telephons rumber for customer inquiries and complaints	(800) - 864-6922	
112 All trade names that you use in providing telecommunications services. This		
should include all names by which you are identified on customer bills.	5	
a Morris Witteless	, v	
b Beep One		
c Morris Communications, Inc.		
P	¥	
Ct.		
	E	
. Use an additional sheet if necessary.	Each reporting entity must provide all names used for carrier activities.	
PERSONS MAKING WILLFUL FALSE STATEMENTS IN THE WORKSHEE	persons making willful false statements in the worksheet can be punished by fine or imprisonment under title 18 of the united states code, 18 U.S.C. \$1001	JES CODE, 13 U.S.C. §1001
		FCC Form 499-A
		February 2000

*******	At Basional Gonard Sinformation	
201	Filer 499 ID [from Line 101]	812163
202	Legal name of reporting entity [from Line 102]	Monfis Communications, Inc.
203	Person who completed this worksheet	Todd Hicks
204	Telephone number of this person	(864) - 234-7309
205	Fax number of this person	(864) - 234-7514
206	E-mail of this person	thicks@morriswireless.com
207	Corporate office, attr. name, and mailing address to which future Telecommunications Reporting Worksheets should be sent	Morris Communications, Inc. Attn: Trace Morris PO Box 16419 Greenville, SC 29605
208	Billing address and billing contact person: [Plan admiréstrators will send bills for contributions to this address. Please attach a written request for alternative billing arrangements.]	Morris Communications, Inc. Attn: Todd Hicks PO Box 16419 Greenville, SC 29606
Since	B: Agent for Salevice of Precises	All carriers must complete Lines 209 through 213
209	D.C. Agent for Service of Process per 47 U.S.C 413	Alston & Bird LLC Attn: Rick Joyce
240	D.C. Agent for Service of Process per 47 O.S.C 413	ASION OF DIEG LEG ALLII. NEX SOYCE
	Telephone number of D.C. agent	(202) - 756-3300
210		
210 211	Telephone number of D.C. agent	(202) - 756-3300
210 211	Telephone number of D.C. agent Fax number of D.C. agent E-mail of D.C. agent	(202) - 756-3300 (202) - 756-3333
210 211 212 213	Telephone number of D.C. agent Fax number of D.C. agent E-mail of D.C. agent Complete business address of D.C. agent	(202) - 756-3300 (202) - 756-3333 rjoyce@alston.com Alston & Bird LLC Attn: Rick Joyce 601 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W. North Bidg. 11th Floor
210 211 212 213 214	Telephone number of D.C. agent Fax number of D.C. agent E-mail of D.C. agent Complete business address of D.C. agent for hand service of documents	(202) - 756-3300 (202) - 756-3333 rjoyce@alston.com Alston & Bird LLC Attn: Rick Joyce 601 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W. North Bidg. 11th Floor
210 211 212 213 213	Telephone number of D.C. agent Fax number of D.C. agent E-mail of D.C. agent Complete business address of D.C. agent for hand service of documents Alternate Agent for Service of Process (optional)	(202) - 756-3300 (202) - 756-3333 rjoyce@alston.com Alston & Bird LLC Attn: Rick Joyce 601 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W. North Bidg. 11th Floor
210 211 212 213 213 	Telephone number of D.C. agent Fax number of D.C. agent E-mail of D.C. agent Complete business address of D.C. agent for hand service of documents Atternate Agent for Service of Process (optional) Telephone number of alternate agent	(202) - 756-3300 (202) - 756-3333 rjoyce@alston.com Alston & Bird LLC Attn: Rick Joyce 601 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W. North Bidg. 11th Floor
210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217	Telephone number of D.C. agent Fax number of D.C. agent E-mail of D.C. agent Complete business address of D.C. agent for hand service of documents Atternate Agent for Service of Process (optional) Telephone number of alternate agent Fax number of alternate agent	(202) - 756-3300 (202) - 756-3333 rjoyce@alston.com Alston & Bird LLC Attn: Rick Joyce 601 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W. North Bidg. 11th Floor

FCC Form 499-A February 2000

2000 F	FCC Form 499A Telecommunications Reporting W	orksheet			<u></u>	Page 3	
Sinck &	Christa Chrise Assails litternings						
301	Filer 499 ID. [from Line 101]	812163					
302	Legal name of reporting entity [from Line 102]	Morris Communications, In				· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
	t Billed Revenue for January 1 through December 31, 1999		if breakouts	are not book	Bre	akouts	
Do not report any negative numbers. Dollar amounts may be rounded to the nearest thousand dollars. However, report all amounts as whole dollars.		Total Revenue	amounts, enter whole percentage estimates		Interstate	International	
0 1-	and the second s			internationa	1	Revenue	
	structions regarding percent interstate & international.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	
	from Service Provided for Resale by Other Contributers to Iniversal Service Support Mechanisms						
	<u>çal service</u>						
303 a	Monthly service, local calling, connection charges, vertical features, and other local exchange service including subscriber line and PICC charges to IXCs Provided as unbundled network elements						
b	Provided under other arrangements						
304	Per minute charges for originating or terminating calls						
а а	Provided under state or federal access tariff						
þ	Provided as unbundled network elements or other contract arrangement	nt					
305	Local private fine & special access						
306	Payphone compensation from toll carriers					·	
307	Other local telecommunications service revenues					· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
308	Universal service support revenue received from Federal or State Sources						
Mobile s	ervice (Including wireless felephorry, paging & messaging, and other mobile services)						
309	Monthly, activation, and message charges except toll	459,130	12%		55,096		
Toll sen	rice						
310	Operator and toll calls with alternative billing arrangements (credit card, collect, international call-back, etc.)	24444444444444444444444444444444444444					
311	Ordinary Long Distance (MTS, customer toil free 800/888 service, associated monthly account maintenance, PICC pass-through, and switched services not reported above)						
312	Long distance private line services						

PERSONS MAKING WILLFUL FALSE STATEMENTS IN THE WORKSHEET CAN BE PUNISHED BY FINE OR IMPRISONMENT UNDER TITLE 18 OF THE UNITED STATES CODE, 18 U.S.C. §1003

313 Satellite services
314 All other long distance services

PERSONS MAKING WILLFUL FALSE STATEMENTS IN THE WORKSHEET CAN BE PUNISHED BY FINE OR IMPRISONMENT UNDER TITLE 18 OF THE UNITED STATES CODE, 18 U.S.C. \$1001

13.013.230

8,468,442

Gross billed revenue from all sources [incl. reseller & non-telcom.)

Universal service contribution bases (Lines 403 through 411

TLines 303 through 314 plus Lines 403 through 418]

& Lines 413 through 417

1.071.309

1,016,213

Books	Additional Revenu	e Breekouts						
501	Filer 498 ID [from Lir	e 101j	812163					
502	Legal name of reporti	ng entity [from Line 102] Morris C	Morris Communications, Inc.					
Most t	ilers must contribute t	LNP administration and must provide the percentages re	guested in Lines 503 through 510.					
Filing .		503 to certify that they are exempt from this requirement ne	• •	Block 3	Block 4			
		enue reported in Block 3 and Block 4 billed in each region at whole percentage. Enter 0 of no service was provided in		Carrier's Carrier (a)	End-User Telecom. (b)			
503	Southeast: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louislana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee and U.S. Virgin Islands			100%	100%			
504	Western:	%	%					
505	West Coast:	California, Hawaii, Nevada, American Samoa, Guarr Wake Island.	%	%				
506	Mid-Atlantic:	. %	%					
507	Mid-West:	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin		%	%			
508	Northeast:	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire	, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont	%	%			
509	Southwest:	Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, & Texas		%	%			
510	Totai	[Percentages must add to 0 or 100]		100%	100 %			
511	may be excluded t	seliers that do not contribute to Universal Service support rom a filer's TRS, NANPA and LNP contribution bases. To g such revenues below.						
		·	(b)					
	Revenues from re:	ellers that do not contribute to Universal Service	Total Revenue	Interstate and International				
	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		N BE PUNISHED BY FINE OR IMPRISONMENT UNDER TITLE 18 OF THE UNITED					

FCC Form 499-A February 2000

2080	FCC Form 499A Telecommunications Reporting	ng Worksheet			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Page 6	
Eigel	CEPTE CATION IS A LINE I by would be of the file.						
801	Filer 499 ID [from Line 101]	812	163				
	Legal name of reporting entity [from Line 102]	Morris Communication	ıs, Inc.				
	Section IV of the instructions provides information on which types of Any entity claiming to be exempt from one or more contribution required Universal Service administrator will determine which entities min Black 4, even if you fail to so certify, below.]	f reporting entities are requirements should so certify	ired to file for which below and attach ar	explanation.			•
603	I certify that the reporting entity is exempt from contributing to:						_
Provi	Universal Service TRS de explanation below:		NANPA			LNP Administration	
				· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		•	
						-	
							
604	I certify that the revenue data contained herein is privileged and con would likely cause substantial harm to the competitive position of the of the revenue information contained herein pursuant to Sections 0.54.711 and 64.604 of the Commission's Rules.	e company. I request nond		mation			X
605	I certify that I am an officer of the above-named reporting entity, that knowledge, information and belief, all statements of fact contained is statement of the affairs of the above-named company for the previous Signature	in this Worksheel are true	going report and to t and that said Works	he best of my heet is an accurate			
606	Printed name of officer	H. A. Morris III		- 		•	
607	Position with reporting entity	President/CEO					
608	Date	3/22/02					
609	This filing is:	Original filing		X Revised filing			
	For additional information regarding this worksheet contact: Telecommunications R		(973) 560-4400 or via	e-mail: Form499@neca.org			
	BEDRONG MARING WAILER EALSE STATEMENTS IN THE V	MODVEMENT CAN BE SIMICUO	O RY FINE OR IMPRISO	JOINTH-WILL INDIDEDS THEFT IN OF	DAE SINITED STATES TYDE	TRIESC STOUT	

FCC Form 499-A February 2000